

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 11-14 and 16-22 are pending. Claims 10 and 15 have been canceled. Claims 5-6 have been withdrawn. Claims 17-22 are new. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-4, 7-9, 11-14 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph due to the phrase "wherein the second surface ... is a material selected from the group" in claims 1 and 3. The office action also states that claim 3 is unclear where the back surface is in relation to the rest of the laminate. By way of the above amendment, the wording has been revised. The office action states that claims 1 and 3 "refers only the second surface". Since claims 1 and 3 recite "a base material having a first surface and a second surface," the statement in the office action is not understood. Claims 1 and 3, however, have been carefully reviewed and revised.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 8, 9, 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,384,174, Ward et al. ("Ward"). Claims 7, 11, 12 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ward in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,376,418, Rogers et al. ("Rogers").

Independent claims 1 and 3 have been amended. Support for the amended wording is located in the application as filed, for example FIG. 1, FIG. 3(f), and FIG 6. Insofar as the rejections may be applied to the claims as amended, the applicants respectfully request that these rejections be withdrawn for reasons including the following, which are provided by way of example.

Claim 1, for example, recites that “the protective material is provided as first and second portions thereof, *only* on first and second sides of the second surface of the base material, the first and second portions being *spaced apart*.” In Ward, in comparison, the second piece (14) (protective material) exists on the entire peripheral portion of the backing layer (1) (base material), not “*only*” on the first and second sides of the backing layer.

Claim 1 also recites “the first and second portions defining a void therebetween.” In Ward, to the contrary, the central area (13) surrounded by second piece (14) is removed when the adhesive sheet is used (col. 6, lines 51-53). Ward’s adhesive sheet has an entirely different purpose from the present sheet which is intended to be wound on a roll so that the void between the first and second portions acts as a spacer. Ward’s sheet would not be wound into a roll, and if it was, the central area (13) inside the second piece (14) prevents the spacer effect, and the second piece (14) which curves around especially defeats the spacer effect.

Claim 3 is also believed to be distinguished from Ward for similar reasons.

Ward fails to teach or suggest, for example, these elements recited in the independent claims. It is respectfully submitted therefore that the independent claims are patentable over Ward alone or in combination with the other references of record.

For at least these reasons, the combination of features recited in the independent claims, when interpreted as a whole, is submitted to patentably distinguish over the references of record. In addition, Ward clearly fails to show other recited elements as well.

With respect to the rejected dependent claims, the applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable not only by virtue of their dependency from independent claims 1 and 3, but also because of additional features they recite in combination.

New claims 17-22 are added. Support for the new claims 17 and 19 is located in paragraph [0039], support for new claims 18 and 20 is located in paragraphs [0041] and [0032], and support for new claims 21 and 22 is located in FIG. 2 and FIG. 6.

New claims 17 and 19 recite that “the base material is made of polycarbonate, poly (methyl methacrylate), or polystyrene.” New claims 18 and 20 recite that “the base material is a release treated film or paper.” None of the references teach or suggest these features, in combination. Accordingly, claims 17-20 are believed to be allowable.

New claims 21 and 22 are directed to “A roll of the laminate sheet” of claim 1 or claim 3, “wherein the laminate sheet is disposed in a longitudinally rolled-up form, the void existing between the first and second portions.” None of the references teach or suggest these features. Moreover, one of skilled in the art would have no reason to wind Ward’s adhesive sheet into a roll since it is not long. Accordingly, claims 21-22 are believed to be allowable.

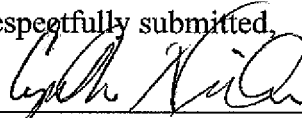
The applicants respectfully submit that, as described above, the cited art does not show or suggest the combination of features recited in the claims. The applicants do not concede that the cited art shows any of the elements recited in the claims. However, the applicants have provided specific examples of elements in the claims that are clearly not present in the cited art.

The applicants strongly emphasize that one reviewing the prosecution history should not interpret any of the examples the applicants have described herein in connection with distinguishing over the cited art as limiting to those specific features in isolation. Rather, for the sake of simplicity, the applicants have provided examples of why the claims described above are distinguishable over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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